

Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD)  
Performance Progress Report - PDG B-5 Renewal  
Quarter 1 - Date: March 29, 2021

**Activity 1: Needs Assessment Follow-up**

- 1. Major activities and accomplishments** – In Q1, the Request for Sealed Proposals (RFSP) was posted.
- 2. Problems** – This project faced delays due to the need to repost the RFSP. The review process is moving forward.
- 3. Significant findings and events** – N/A
- 4. Dissemination activities** – N/A
- 5. Other activities** – N/A
- 6. Activities planned for the next reporting period** – Execute contract for completion of project.

**Activity 2: Strategic Plan**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*Illinois PDG B-5 Strategic Plan*

During Q1, the Strategic Plan was included as a reference for the City of Chicago strategic plan development. It was also included as a reference related to alignment of state-led initiatives, specifically the Governor's Early Childhood Funding Commission recommendations and the Prenatal to Three (PN3) Policy Agenda (Learning Journey-Strategic Plan process). The Strategic Plan continues to inform discussions within the Illinois BUILD Team and the Illinois Early Learning Council. Plans are underway to revise the Strategic Plan to ensure it is current and reflects priorities reflected in the [Funding Commission Report](#).

*Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

The PDG B-5 supports one Home Visiting Specialist out of a team of three total specialists. As of March 31, 2021, the Home Visiting Specialist outreached to 33 pregnant or parenting families, while the project as a whole outreached to a total of 110 families. The Home Visiting Specialist also supported the referrals of 22 families, while the project as a whole referred a total of 41 families. It has been confirmed that 63 (57%) families signed consent for home visiting, 45 (71%) families were referred to

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home visiting, 11 (24%) families enrolled, and 11 (100%) families are still engaged in home visiting. Of the families that signed a consent, 5 (8%) families later declined home visiting, and 13 (21%) referrals are in process.

On developing policy and procedures for appropriate data sharing between home visiting programs and child welfare agencies, family friendly consent has been developed for parents to sign, which allows for their data to be released by multiple sources in order for evaluation activities to occur. The draft is currently awaiting approval from the Department of Children and Family Services' legal department.

On collaborative trainings throughout the State, the Home Visiting Specialists have held multiple cross training meetings in each region with Department of Children and Family Services/Purchase Of Service Intact supervisors, home visiting programs, and/or Coordinated Intake to strengthen communication and partnership. The team has also started facilitating quarterly Home Visiting-Child Welfare Program Committee meetings in partnership with the Illinois Pregnant and Parenting Youth in Care home visiting project. These calls serve as advisory meetings for home visiting agencies that have received referrals and served intact families. The Home Visiting Specialists also presented on the project at a biweekly meeting of the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) supervisors.

The project continues to make data-driven continuous quality improvements. Based on data gathered in 2020, the project is implementing a new procedure in assigning Home Visiting Specialists to outreach to caseworkers with families under the age of seven months at the start of a new intact case.

## **2. Problems**

### *Illinois PDG B-5 Strategic Plan*

There is a planned revision of the Strategic Plan. A consulting firm has been identified that has experience in strategic planning that uses a racial equity/social justice framework. Identification of consultation firms that have this combined expertise within their portfolio has impacted the timeline.

### *Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

While the Home Visiting Specialists receive notification for every family with a child under the age of three as an Intact case opens, they receive notification if the mother is pregnant directly from the caseworker. The team is working to create more awareness of home visiting and doula support for Intact caseworkers.

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While connecting families to home visiting, Home Visiting Specialists have come across challenges of enrolling families in services due to different enrollment requirements based on different models and funders of the home visiting programs. In response, GOECD is currently working with the major funders of home visiting to develop a consolidated guide on the different enrollment criteria of each funder.

The Home Visiting Specialists have learned that some families can stop engaging in home visiting once their Intact case is closed. It will be important for the team to educate Intact workers about home visiting as a long-term supportive program rather than a short-term intervention.

Finally, some home visiting providers expressed wanting to increase their capacity to serve families with Intact cases. They have also conveyed how difficult it can be to communicate and collaborate with Intact caseworkers, as well as hesitancy to discuss family risks with an Intact caseworker.

### **3. Significant findings and events – N/A**

### **4. Dissemination activities**

#### *Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

Brochures were developed to provide an overview of the project and the contact information of the Home Visiting Specialists. These materials are shared with home visiting programs and Intact agencies that are interested in the project. Additionally, materials were created to show the regions each Home Visiting Specialist covers. Information about the project has also been presented at cross-collaboration meetings, such as the MIECHV Supervisor biweekly meetings and the quarterly Home Visiting-Child Welfare Program Committee meeting.

### **5. Other activities – N/A**

### **6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

#### *Illinois PDG B-5 Strategic Plan*

Execution of a contract with a consulting firm that has expertise in strategic planning that uses a racial equity/social justice framework.

#### *Home Visiting/Child Welfare Initiative*

In Q2 of 2021, the project will continue to: make and monitor referrals to home visiting; facilitate cross-training of child welfare and home visiting providers; refine data sharing

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policy and procedures; and survey home visiting programs again about their use of Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (I/ECMHC).

## **Activity 3: Maximizing Parent & Family Knowledge, Choice, & Engagement**

### **1. Major activities and accomplishments**

#### *Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

In Q1 of 2021, the Family Advisory Committee (FAC) parent leaders participated in ongoing trainings led by COFI (Community Organizing and Family Issues), a parent leadership and advocacy agency. From January to February, the FAC parent leaders participated in a 6-session workshop on Self, Family & Team Training. From March through May, they are participating in monthly sessions that build parent leadership and advocacy around important early childhood issues.

In January, the co-chairs of the committees of the Illinois Early Learning Council (the State Advisory Council) met with the FAC parent leaders to share their committee objectives, goals, and desires for parent engagement as they implement their workplans. FAC parent leaders also shared what they see as the best ways to maximize intentional parent engagement within the Early Learning Council committee work.

In February, the FAC parent leaders attended their first full Early Learning Council and Early Learning Council Executive Committee meetings. In March, one of the FAC parent leaders presented a webinar on the function and inner workings of the FAC for *Spring into Action*, a weekly webinar series hosted by Illinois Action for Children. The March webinar focused on early childhood providers and families as partners and advocates for early childhood community concerns.

In early March, several FAC parent leaders participated in a pilot project with the Early Learning Council's Integration & Alignment Committee. The goal of the pilot project was to surface what program standards would look like if the State were solely responsible for the blending and braiding of funding (e.g., the Early Childhood Block Grant and the Child Care Assistance Program) to provide one consistent, coherent, and stable funding stream. FAC parent leaders were asked to share their experiences and make recommendations for how to address racial equity and geographic disparities in access to funding and services in Illinois.

The FAC mentors are comprised of prior parent leaders from the Family Engagement and Implementation Subcommittee (FEIS), the subcommittee of the Early Learning Council that proposed and facilitated the creation of the FAC. The original role of the

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mentor has adjusted based on the needs of the FAC parent leaders. The mentors are now working with COFI to co-facilitate the trainings. Additionally, the mentors are serving as thought partners to the group of FAC parent leaders instead of conducting one-on-one mentorship.

After the FAC application process ended last year, there were approximately 70 parents from the pool of applicants who were not selected to serve on the FAC who had expressed an interest in policy-related parent engagement work. Although it was not in the original workplan, it was decided that creating an auxiliary parent group with these parents would be beneficial. Illinois Action for Children has received numerous calls from internal and external program partners seeking to hire parents committed to bringing their voice to the policy-making table. The auxiliary parent group has been a resourceful in filling this void. Currently, Action's Community Engagement Associate, who is the liaison staff for the FAC, is working to establish relationships with these parents to gauge their interest and skill levels. After gathering this information, we will make recommendations to the program partners seeking to hire parent leaders.

## *Parent Cafés*

During Q1 of 2021, the eighteen early childhood agencies were expected to train their parent leaders and conduct their parent cafés. The goal was for each agency to have a total of sixty parents participate in their parent cafés.

Based on preliminary data from the evaluations, the majority of agencies reached the goal of sixty parent participants. A common theme among the parents attending the parent café's was "they liked talking with other parents" and they realized they were "not alone". The agencies that had challenges reaching their goals were offered additional support by the Process Coach via both one-on-one and group coaching. The Process Coach supported with marketing ideas, parent engagement strategies, and creative approaches for the cafés. The timeline for completion of the parent cafés was extended for those who needed it. The evaluations are still being finalized, and results will be reported in the next quarterly report.

## **2. Problems**

### *Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

The Early Learning Council is currently updating their goals, Governing Principles (bylaws), and membership expectations. Due to this refresh, concrete information about the role of FAC parent leaders, as well as logistics and Governing Principles for functioning are still in process. Additionally, one of the parent leaders in region four had

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to step down due to personal reasons. Another application process was launched, and we have been successful in filling this void.

## *Parent Cafés*

Due to delayed contract execution, some agencies did not fulfill their obligation to conduct parent cafés for the families within their community. The deadline for these agencies has been extended to March, and the plan is to begin a new cohort of agencies in April. Agencies from the previous cohort are welcome to apply again if they wish.

### **3. Significant findings and events**

#### *Parent Café's*

This year's model of selecting eighteen agencies to conduct parent cafés was new. A lot was learned about how to best support the agencies using this model. For the next cohort, the application process will be more involved to determine the family engagement approaches and capacity of each agency. During the trainings, focus will be given to the importance of the parent café model in building parent resiliency, connections, and leadership. The Illinois Head Start Association also had to be flexible and provide additional support to agencies whose infrastructure made it difficult to provide some of the parent incentives, which are important components of the parent café model; this needed flexibility was an important lesson learned.

### **4. Dissemination activities**

#### *Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

GOECD featured a "Welcome to the ELC Family Advisory Committee Parent Leaders" in the [January edition of their newsletter](#), which is disseminated to 7,000 subscribers statewide. Additionally, the National Center for Preschool Development Grants Birth Through Five (PDG B-5 TA Center) has released a new brief, [How State Leaders Can Promote Meaningful Family Engagement at the State and Program Level](#) that features the FAC as example of how states are preparing parents to participate in shaping state policy and programs.

### **5. Other activities – N/A**

### **6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

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## *Early Learning Council Family Advisory Committee (FAC)*

The planned activities for Q2 are to prepare the FAC parents to initiate their own Early Learning Council committee meetings (identifying meeting structure, norms, consistent dates, and frequency) and to identify co-chairs and a staffer for the FAC.

## *Parent Cafés*

In Q2 2021 the planned activities are to revise, release, and promote the application for a new cohort of agencies, utilizing lessons learned to enhance the application process. The focus of the upcoming parent cafés will be on serving infants and toddlers.

## **Activity 4: Sharing Best Practices & Professional Development for the Workforce**

### **1. Major activities and accomplishments**

#### *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

Due to training delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic, carryover projects from last year were extended into this quarter for Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and Head Start/Early Head Start. The ISBE project held its final two days of FAN training on February 17th and March 22nd. The Head Start/Early Head Start project held its final two days of FAN training on February 2nd and February 9th. The Head Start/Early Head Start Train the Trainer project began, and work is underway.

#### *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

In Q1, the Pyramid Model Consortium (PMC) continued to engage in (at least) weekly Zoom calls with all relevant stakeholders to execute the activities and deliverables outlined in the PDG B-5 Year 2 scope of work. While COVID-19 has continued to keep activities remote, PMC was able to operationalize the plan as intended, with modifications made to adjust for virtual formats.

Delivery of 12 individual program-wide Leadership Team launches: There are currently six child care programs that had a successful launch at the end of Q4; PMC is working with their CCR&R agencies to launch an additional six Family Child Care programs (all Spanish-speaking). PMC is conducting monthly meetings with the Process Coaches of the new child care programs as they continue to support their program's Leadership Teams. New and existing programs have been provided access to various Pyramid Model trainings through eMods, as well as live virtual events (including Prevent-Teach-

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Reinforce for Families, Positive Solutions for Families, Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children, Preschool ToT Boosters, and Practice Based Coaching).

Build Capacity of five Targeted CCR&Rs: Process Coaches in each of the five CCR&Rs have been identified and are working to support six child care programs. PMC is supporting them through monthly check-ins and additional one-on-one support from a long-time Process Coach. Practice Based Coaching trainings are being offered to support their work, and PMC and related stakeholders are in discussion with relevant State Agencies about Tier 3 supports and the role of mental health consultation in this work.

Provide ongoing logistics, supports, technology for professional development (PD) delivery and data tracking: Training materials are disseminated via mail or electronically for each of the Zoom PD events. Using Eventbrite, individuals can register for events in advance, and PMC is provided with their demographic information. PMC is coordinating with INCCRRA on an ongoing basis to provide Gateways credit for PD events, as well as providing event attendees with an ISBE Certificate of Completion. Technical Assistance (TA) is being provided for virtual events through the use of system tests with trainers before events, presentation assistance, and recordings for participants. Online learning modules and self-assessments have continued, and TA is provided through PMC or their partners at Trifoia. Evaluation/feedback is being collected at the conclusion of each PD event through a Survey Monkey link disseminated by the PD facilitator.

### *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

Maintain database of Registry-Approved Pyramid Model trainings: Pyramid Model Information Forms continue to be submitted from Master Cadre Members and Pyramid Model Trainers, and Coaches. Local delivery Pyramid Model trainings that are submitted and scheduled through Gateways are Registry-Approved trainings. Professional Development trainings offered by the Pyramid Model Consortium are entered into the Gateways system.

Continued support and administration of Relationship Based Professional Development within child care programs: Six center-based child care programs participated in the Pyramid Model Child Care Implementation launch on February 18, 2021. Each program will be working with CCR&R staff and have been assigned a Pyramid Model Process Coach to begin work with the Leadership Team. Planning and recruitment efforts began to add additional Family Child Care programs beginning in Q2.

Evaluation of Pyramid Model Implementation Sites: Preliminary Early Childhood Benchmarks of Quality (EC BoQ) results from programs collected in Q1 indicated that

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many Leadership Teams are making progress across the critical elements. The established Leadership Teams report most fidelity with 1) overall functioning of Leadership Teams and 2) family engagement. Emerging areas of growth are noted in the elements surrounding 1) *Procedures for Responding to Challenging Behavior* and 2) *Monitoring Implementation and Outcomes* (data collection). New child care implementation sites have begun to build their Leadership Teams, and a few have collected baseline EC BoQ data points.

Evaluation of Pyramid Model Consortium professional development events: For the evaluation, instrument development and data collection has continued as planned. This quarter has included training events in Prevent Teach Reinforce (PTR) for Families and PTR for Young Children, Positive Solutions for Families, Practice-based Coaching, and Train the Trainer Boosters for Pyramid Modules Level 1, 2, and 3. Data Collection guidelines have been updated for Process Coaches with links. Newly implementing child care sites have been added to all data collection tools and Process Coaches have received training.

Pyramid Model Consortium professional development offerings have continued virtually in Q1. Over 100 attendees (with duplicates) from the Master Cadre, providers from implementation programs, and broader Pyramid Model trainers have participated in real time events. 2,900 licenses for the online ePyramid Modules in Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care have been distributed and accessed by participants in PDG B-5 Year 1, with an additional 850 Reducing Implicit Bias being distributed in Q1 of Year 2. Participants in the self-paced online trainings find the trainings to relevant and supportive of their work.

Upcoming trainings include strategies to support high quality inclusion, "peer to peer" and group Practice-based Coaching, the Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT), and associated TPOT booster trainings.

Evaluation of capacity-building of professional development provider workforce: Process Coaches continue to collaborate with program Leadership Teams, administrators, internal coaches, and other staff virtually due to COVID restrictions. In Q1, Process Coaches have supported program Leadership Teams in providing ongoing resources for families while children are at home, remote coaching strategies, and guidance around adapting Pyramid Model practices to remote/virtual teaching and learning. As programs begin to open, Process Coaches are beginning to support Leadership Teams with "re-opening" plans and supports. This support will continue to be beneficial as more programs re-open their physical doors and providers assess the social-emotional-behavioral needs of children and their families.

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Evaluation data analysis and reporting: All data collection instruments for training, coaching, and leadership teams have updated evaluations in Survey Monkey (previously Survey Gizmo was used). New links have been shared with the Process Coaches and a live Q&A session with Process Coaches was held to support their use of the tools.

#### *Inclusion Professional Development System*

Early CHOICES is collaborating with existing technical assistance providers and trainers through two statewide groups to establish models of exemplary practices in child care: the Inclusion Subcommittee of the Integration & Alignment Committee of the Early Learning Council and the Early Childhood Least Restricted Environment Stakeholders Consortium.

In Q1, the cross-system professional development provider Community of Practice (COP) launched. The CoP will increase knowledge, improve skills, and advance a shared understanding to support the inclusion of young children with their same age peers. Forty-nine participants plus the Early CHOICES team of six enrolled from across the State in Early Intervention, Head Start, CCR&R, mental health consultants, pre-k, Early Childhood Special Education professional development providers, higher education, and not for profit groups. Dates are set, calendar invites have gone out, and the first survey for participants has been shared. Professional learning and technical assistance with three QRIS Pilot child care sites are underway. The three programs are Prairieland Child Care in Morris, Little Angels in Harrisburg, and Centralia Mary's House in Centralia.

Early CHOICES met with Prairieland January 8, 2021 to review What Makes Inclusion Work and determine their needs. The owner was still working through budget and the hiring of staff. Plans are set to work on building relationships with the three school districts that the child care center works most closely with. Understanding the referral process to schools and consent from families is a first step. Early Intervention providers already come to the center and share information with child care.

Early CHOICES met with Little Angels on January 25th to review What Makes Inclusion Work and determine their needs. The owner/director expressed a need to connect with the two school districts in her area. Again, understanding referral, early childhood special education and consent were a priority.

Early CHOICES met with Centralia Mary's House January 7th, 25th, and March 1st to review What Makes Inclusion Work and determine their needs. Centralia Mary's House demonstrated a similar need for communication with school districts and understanding referral process. Early CHOICES shared sample consents that could be added to the parent packet. This child care center has an excellent inclusion policy already in their

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handbook. The next step is to build upon it to create connection with Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education providers and administrators. This community has a special education cooperative that will be important to connect with to support children.

Community Inclusion Team (CIT) implementation in at least two communities: Early CHOICES is working with three CITs in Mannheim, Collinsville, and Springfield. The *Preschool Inclusion Toolbox* series has continued with presentations on January 21st, February 4th, February 18th, and March 18th from the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and National Center for Pyramid Model Implementation Team. At the Toolbox presentations, each CIT shares their latest work, action plan, and barriers, which allows for sharing across teams. Major themes include public awareness of inclusion as well as this project so that outreach into community-based organizations can be maximized. Early CHOICES is sharing many materials on inclusion such as *What Makes Inclusion Work* posters, Each & Every Child Inclusion brochures from ISBE, and links to online modules Understanding Inclusion. Other needs expressed by the CIT's are a better method to support CIT members with understanding funding sources and layering of funds in Illinois, as well as policy guidance around transportation. The State Leadership Team is taking on some of these higher-level policy needs.

### *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

Initial updates were made to the Gateways Registry that include a clearly defined position of a home visitor and selection of an evidence-based home visiting model. An email blast was sent on March 8, 2021 to 1,281 self-reported home visitors and home visitor supervisors already active in the Gateways Registry. The purpose of the email was to ask that home visitors/supervisors update their profile in the Registry to indicate which of the evidence-based home visiting models they use. As of April 5, 2021, there are 1,355 home visitors registered in the Gateways Registry. In this group, 385 home visitors (28%) have recorded which model they use.

### *Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohorts (EC4) Expansion*

An Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) was executed with the Illinois State Board of Education. All year one institutions have been retained for Year Two cohort work.

### *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

During the first quarter, all five institutions developed implementation proposals with a corresponding budget. INCCRRA created a project tracking system designed to manage the span of work based on the proposals that ensured 100% of all competencies will be tested at two (or more) institutions and with a projected (minimal) number of 25

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students. Individual meetings with each partnering higher education institutions were held, as well as planning and kick-off meeting(s) with faculty and consultants to review pilot implementation parameters, data metrics, and timeline. In partnership with faculty, the national consultant created surveys to track both the student and faculty responses to the module.

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

Meetings have been held between ISBE and INCCRRA to discuss databases and data sharing agreements.

## *Gateways: Credential Fees*

Information about the credential fee waiver was posted on the Gateways website in January. Significant numbers of the ECEC workforce submitted Gateways Credential applications. In Q1, there were 1,516 credential applications received. From these applications, 969 credentials were awarded to 714 distinct individuals (some applicants qualify for more than one credential).

## *Gateways: Education Reimbursement*

The application and materials were made publicly available in February 2021.

## **2. Problems**

### *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

There have been no problems or deviations from the work plan except for PD events being held virtually, as opposed to in-person.

### *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

Training activity has been limited due to COVID-19. Trainers, coaches, and Master Cadre members did not submit Pyramid Model Information Forms in a timely manner, impacting their entry into the registry as an identified Pyramid Model Trainer/Coach.

### *Inclusion Professional Development System*

Early CHOICES hopes to be able to travel soon, as it is difficult to determine the actual issues in supporting children with disabilities without seeing the classrooms in action.

Early CHOICES is keenly aware that the information and understanding of the suspension and expulsion rules are not reaching the child care centers. When mentioned, the child care centers ask for guidance on what they should be doing. Given the lack of awareness of the referral process and connection with the Child and Family

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Connections (CFC) and the school districts, this is a very large issue to begin to address. Center owners did not know about their Local Interagency Council or could identify their designated CFC; however, they could identify their individual Early Intervention providers.

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

ISBE is currently working on a data system that will eventually be integrated with the State's Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0.

### **3. Significant findings and events**

#### *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

Two Head Start/Early Head Start FAN trainer candidates have begun the ToT to become FAN trainers. Overall, trainees that participated in the FAN training found the trainings to be very helpful and rated the overall experience as positive. Participants expressed that they will incorporate FAN training into their practice, specifically – practicing self-compassion, being more mindful, using strategies to repair relationship with families due to mis-attunement, being more reflective with coworkers and families, and showing compassion for families.

#### *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

Preschool ToT Module 1 Booster (n=21): Overall participants rated this training as a 4.5/5 stars. 95% of participants reported "strongly agree" or "agree" to all learning objectives. They found practice, new strategies for training, and enhancement for virtual engagement to be most important. Moving forward, they would like time to practice, tools for virtual learning, and sharing opportunities with other trainers.

Preschool ToT Module 2 Booster (n=9): Overall participants rated this training as a 4.3/5 stars. 100% of participants reported "strongly agree" or "agree" to all learning objectives. They found examples from the trainer and practice to be most important. Moving forward, they would like more practice and more online/virtual materials for presenting.

PTR-F (n=9, 56% response rate): Overall participants rated this training as a 4.5/5 stars. 100% of participants reported "strongly agree" or "agree" to all learning objectives. They found supporting family engagement in the process, building relationships with families, and supporting families in making a plan to be most important. Moving forward, they would like more support from trainers to use the process with fidelity. They also noted that interactive PDFs did not work as expected, and it was a long day of training virtually.

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PTR-YC (n=33, 100% response rate): Overall participants rated this training as a 4.5/5 stars. 92% of participants reported "strongly agree" or "agree" to all learning objectives. They found routines within routines, rules, and expectations to be most important. Moving forward, they desired more on routines within routines during academics. They noted that breakout rooms were okay but would prefer in-person training, if possible.

Positive Solutions for Families (n=13, 81% response rate): Overall participants rated this training as a 4.5/5 stars. 91% of participants reported "strongly agree" or "agree" to all learning objectives. They found ideas for "make and takes," virtual supports for families, engaging children and families together to be most important. Moving forward, they desired more pre-printed materials for use with families and more supports for return to in-person learning. They noted that they wished it was an in-person event.

### *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

The [2020 Pyramid Model Evaluation](#) found professional development priority areas include trainings to support families (PTR-F, Positive Solutions for Families); training to support equity, such as in inclusion strategies, the PBC Equity Guide, and Implicit Bias training; and strategies to address challenging behavior via PTR-YC. For a sample of implementation sites with data from two points in time, EC-BOQ results indicate progress over the past two years. For these programs, notable progress has been made in several areas including: Staff Buy-in, Family Engagement, Establishing Program-wide Expectations, and Professional Development and Staff Support Plans. Program leaders indicated the need for continued training and ongoing access to the Pyramid Model trainings (e.g., PM Modules, BIRS, TPOT). Other needs included continued support from Process Coaches, assistance for engaging and supporting families, and guidance for implementing the Pyramid Model remotely or with COVID-19 adjustments in classrooms. Participants typically found the statewide events to be relevant and useful to their professional practice. Across events, most participants expressed confidence that implementing the strategies has the potential to benefit the children in their care. There were more than 260 attendees across the real-time professional development events, including members of the Master Cadre, personnel from the implementation sites, and members of the broader group of Pyramid Model Trainers. Additionally, more than 1,400 licenses for accessing the online ePyramid Modules in both Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care were distributed to the implementation sites for self-paced use among staff.

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## *Inclusion Professional Development System*

Cross-Sector Professional Learning: The response of the Community of Practice has been very positive. The range of interest from seasoned professional development providers to those who are newer to the idea of supporting inclusion are joining. Early CHOICES is looking for innovative ways to assure the events are interactive and meaningful for all the participants.

QRIS Pilot: There is a common goal to support child care centers in building relationships with school districts. There is a need for public awareness materials regarding the Pilot to explain the effort to improve quality. All three programs use suspension as a tool and are not aware of the legislation or strategies to avoid it. All three programs are confused about the various people who are supporting them including the role of the CCR&R, mental health consultants, and DCFS all of which were supports prior to the Pilot.

Community Inclusion Teams: The CITs continue to work their way through the *Preschool Inclusion Toolbox*, but Early CHOICES is slowing down the pace of the implementation of each chapter to assure the work really gets done in the interest of keeping pace with the presentations. The Inclusion Specialists are also learning about ways to support the CIT leads in delegating the work. The community-based organizations are not able to take as much of the special education work on but can do the non-child specific work, such as supporting outreach and public awareness. All three sites are working on building more connection with community-based organizations and adding families to the CIT's.

## *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

Of the 385 home visitors that have recorded the model that they use, only five home visitors reported that they did not use any of the evidence-based models listed. This is important, as they will not be included in the data analysis that is specific to the home visiting workforce.

## *Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort (EC4) Expansion*

The Early Childhood Credential Completion Cohort project is reaching racially and ethnically diverse working professionals. All Year One (Y1) institutions have been retained for Year Two (Y2) cohort work. Cohort plans for Year Two have been developed and reviewed. Despite the pandemic, the vast majority of Year One students are on track to complete. The enhanced coaching, mentoring, and advising was cited by institutional leaders as a major factor in retaining students. Institutions are tracking

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student satisfaction and other key data about the efficacy of their cohort approaches and features.

## *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

To initiate the pilot, INCCRRA held separate meetings with each institution to discuss expectations and plans. A kick-off meeting was held with all five higher education institutions and the state and national consultants to share collective plans, review the requirements of the pilot, and to further survey design (evaluation tools).

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

INCCRRA continues to expand and enhance the Gateways Registry for eventual linkage to the ILDS 2.0.

## *Gateways: Credential Fees*

The Gateways website and online payment system were utilized as key mechanisms to publicize credential application fee waivers based on PDG B-5 funding. This promotion has resulted in more than 100 applications received weekly during this first quarter.

## *Gateways: Education Reimbursements*

An Education Reimbursement web slider notification was placed on the Gateways to Opportunity website and a Facebook post was made to share program availability.

## **4. Dissemination activities**

### *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

The IL Pyramid Model 2020 Evaluation Report was officially disseminated to the Statewide Leadership team, as well as posted on the GOECD website for broad audiences. The Office of Child Care also expressed interest in featuring this report on their website.

2,900 licenses for the online ePyramid Modules in Wellness and Trauma-Informed Care have been distributed and accessed by participants in Year 1, with an additional 850 Reducing Implicit Bias being distributed in Q1 of Year 2. Participants in the self-paced online trainings find the trainings to be relevant and supportive of their work.

### *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

The [2020 Pyramid Model Evaluation](#), the full evaluation report of the 43 sites that participated in the Illinois Pyramid Model Implementation in 2020, was shared with members of the State Leadership Team as well as the participating programs and

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stakeholders. Ongoing dissemination of data in the Year 1 report will occur through the development of infographics or 1-3-page briefs that are targeted at both broad and more focused audiences. Additionally, formative data were shared in Q1 including summaries of feedback from PD events and from Process Coach logs.

## *Inclusion Professional Development System*

Community of Practice dissemination of the informational flyer and PowerPoint presentation have gone out through the Inclusion Subcommittee of the Early Learning Council, the Early Childhood Least Restrictive Environment Consortium, as well as via list serves for Head Start, child care and PD Providers. Early CHOICES has information posted on their website at <https://www.eclre.org/research-resources/community-of-practice/>.

Community Inclusion Teams are creating individual press releases by district, and the State Leadership Team is creating project informational flyer. There is also a web page dedicated to this project here <https://www.eclre.org/planning-tools/implementation-of-inclusion-project/>

## *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

As stated earlier, an email blast was sent on March 8, 2021 to 1,281 self-reported home visitors and home visitor supervisors already active in the Gateways Registry.

## *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

A "Virtual Conversation" webinar was held to share highlights of the proposed piloting of the PDG B-5 funded project. Updates were provided to the Professional Development Advisory Council Steering Committee. Planning for further dissemination during the Gateways 2021 Higher Education Forum was facilitated.

## *Gateways: Credential Fees*

The Gateways website and online payment system were used as a key mechanism to publicize the credential application fee waivers.

## *Gateways: Education Reimbursements*

An Education Reimbursement web slider notification was placed on the Gateways to Opportunity website, and a Facebook post was made to share program availability.

## **5. Other activities – N/A**

## **6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

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## *Facilitating Attuned Interactions Training (FAN)*

In Q2 of 2021, one cohort of Supervisor FAN training (Supervisor/ Practitioner) will be offered to 10-12 supervisors; a Train-the-Trainer for Practitioner FAN will be conducted to expand Head Start's capacity to provide FAN training to front-line staff of programs after the grant (trainer team of two); the Head Start/Early Head Start system will have increased access to affordable FAN Training for all sites within the system; and four Community of Practice Meetings targeting Head Start/Early Head Start Programs will be held.

## *Pyramid Model Implementation & Professional Development*

In Q2, PMC will: identify and launch six family child care sites for implementation, continue dissemination of ePyramid Module codes, continue virtual live training events, and continue monthly Process Coach calls for child care sites.

## *Gateways Registry: Pyramid Model Trainers & Coaches*

In Q2 of 2021, INCCRRA will: maintain the database of Registry-Approved Pyramid Model trainings; continue support and administration of Relationship Based Professional Development within child care programs; continue evaluation of Pyramid Model Implementation Sites, Pyramid Model Consortium professional development events; and the capacity-building of professional development provider workforce.

## *Inclusion Professional Development System*

In Q2 of 2021, Early CHOICES will: implement Community of Practice (COP) meetings; analyze the first Community of Practice survey; set up initial introductions for COP members offline; continue monthly meetings with ExceleRate Pilots; set up a training/meeting for all three pilot child care centers to meet together to learn about MOUs and referral expectations; hold monthly meetings with CIT leaders; provide monthly coaching for the Inclusion Specialists with Lise Fox from National Center for Pyramid Model Implementation; and host monthly *Preschool Inclusion Toolbox* meetings with the Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center and the National Center for Pyramid Model Implementation team.

## *Gateways Registry: Home Visiting Enhancement*

In April, GOECD will conduct a wider reach of the email blast throughout the State's home visiting field to ensure that all home visitors are notified, update their profile, and/or newly register as a home visitor in the Gateways Registry system. Afterwards, a final data report will be generated on the home visitor workforce that includes race,

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ethnicity, languages spoken, basic demographics, educational background, credential attainment, and position tenure and turnover.

## *Competency-Based Education (CBE) Modularization*

In Q2, coordination with consultants and faculty partners for monthly/quarterly meetings will continue, as will the review preliminary data metrics (number of students, courses, modules). Potential barriers in State and higher education policies will be identified and monitored and, if needed, strategies will be identified to mitigate policy blocks.

## *Gateways: Linkage Project*

Gateway Registry enhancements will be continued in Q2.

## *Gateways: Credential Fees*

Messaging regarding credential application fee waiver will continue to be disseminated via multiple information sharing platforms. In addition, workforce demographic and credential attainment data will continue to be collected for aggregate reporting purposes. If the response rate continues, the PDG B-5 funding supports for credential fee waivers will be allocated before the end of the calendar years. The continued response from the early childhood education and care workforce continues to validate that the \$65.00 credential application fee is a significant barrier to early educator workforce.

## *Gateways: Education Reimbursements*

Based on projections, 50% of funds will be allocated to eligible providers.

## **Activity 5: Improving Quality/Service Integration, Expanding Access**

### **1. Major activities and accomplishments**

#### *ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

During Q1, GOECD and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) gathered valuable experience in funding child care centers through contracts to cover the cost of increased quality. At the end of last year (Q4), 36 centers had executed contracts to support enhanced salaries to meet the Pilot salary scale and to add staff to meet the Pilot staffing pattern. During Q1, all 36 centers continued paying the enhanced salaries and began hiring to meet the staffing pattern. (In February, one of the family-

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owned centers closed because of family changes.) Participating centers completed a survey on their experience with the contracting process, and based on the results, GOECD prepared a set of recommendations for IDHS to streamline the process. Recommendations are now being shared internally.

Support for Continuous Quality Improvement ramped up during Q1. Early in the quarter, GOECD presented a webinar to center directors, giving more detail on the full set of Pilot standards, including resources to support implementation and the indicators GOECD will use to determine compliance. The Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA) updated the Pilot web page with the new information. The McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership at National-Louis University continued its weekly sessions with centers to familiarize them with the Environmental Rating Scales in preparation for Q2 baseline assessments. In addition, a leadership advisor from the McCormick Center completed the first round of meetings with center directors to review the results of their Administrator Role Perception Surveys (ARPS) and help them begin their own professional development planning.

### *ExceleRate Family Child Care Pilot*

This project, scheduled to start in PDG B-5 Year 2, was envisioned to test supports for Continuous Quality Improvement in home-based child care settings. The ExceleRate Subcommittee of the Early Learning Council established a Family Child Care Workgroup to propose Continuous Quality Improvement supports at the community level, which could ultimately be included in a revised set of ExceleRate QRIS standards and supports. During Q1, the Workgroup proposed supports in two categories: facilitating peer-to-peer activities that empower providers, and coordinating strategies among local family child care associations, Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, and staffed family child care networks. GOECD is using these recommendations to shape IDHS contracts to plan and begin testing such activities in three regions of the State.

### *Community Planning for Expansion*

This project continues to engage communities in which large numbers of young children are unserved by early learning programs, help them build local planning teams, and facilitate capacity-building. During Q1, the subgrantee implementing this project, Illinois Action for Children (IAFC) proposed responding to COVID-19-related delays (closing of schools and interruptions of child care) by reorganizing communities into cohorts. The Elgin, Illinois, planning group was able to move forward without major delays, and that group has become the test group for project activities.

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Following Elgin are three cohorts, the first working from January through December 2021 (5 communities), the second from July 2021 through June 2022 (4 communities), and the third from January 2022 through December 2022 (5 communities). GOECD accepted this scheduling change.

Project activities have gained momentum. The Elgin test group has been very active, participating in data and family engagement workshops and making plans based on that guidance. All five Cohort 1 communities have organized local planning groups and are now in the onboarding process. Two communities have already requested participation in Cohort 2. IAFC has been preparing a document that summarizes lessons learned so far, which will be completed in April.

## **2. Problems**

### *ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

Many center directors struggled to transfer payroll records accurately onto billing forms. Fortunately, IDHS contracted with INCCRRA to review billing details and work with directors to resolve problems. An important lesson learned from the Pilot is that most centers have little internal capacity for financial reporting. GOECD is working with IDHS to address this issue. Also, COVID-19 exacerbated staffing problems and increased staff turnover. This complicating factor will weaken initial evaluation of whether the Pilot salary scale helps reduce turnover.

### *Community Planning for Expansion*

COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for planning groups, particularly for school districts, as they manage virtual, hybrid, or returning to in-person classes for students. This challenge has not prevented groups from meeting completely, but it has taken longer for some planning groups to meet because of scheduling difficulties.

## **3. Significant findings and events**

### *ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

Significant findings include the complexity of the IDHS contracting process and the limited capacity of child care centers to perform financial reporting. On the positive side, implementing the salary scale has improved the morale of center staff at this very difficult time, and center directors are very appreciative of all the quality supports, especially the leadership advising conducted by the McCormick Center.

### *Community Planning for Expansion*

A lessons learned summary is to be completed in Q2.

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#### **4. Dissemination activities**

##### *ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

GOECD included a description of the Pilot in the [January edition](#) of its statewide newsletter and linked to a more complete description of the Pilot. The Governor issued a [press release](#) on March 19<sup>th</sup> announcing the Pilot, including quotes from other leaders and a center director. The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) featured the Pilot in its [March 26 newsletter](#).

##### *Community Planning for Expansion*

Although planned dissemination activities have not begun, the local planning group in Effingham was spotlighted in an article in the [Effingham Daily News](#).

#### **5. Other activities – N/A**

#### **6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

##### *ExceleRate Tiered QRIS/Tiered Funding Pilot*

Activities for Q2 include revision of the contract funding formula and format for State Fiscal Year 22 contracts (based on experience), continued collection of data for evaluation, and the addition of a Support Specialist to aggregate and analyze financial and quality data.

##### *ExceleRate Family Child Care Pilot*

GOECD will work with IDHS to issue three regional contracts to start in Q3 of 2021.

##### *Community Planning for Expansion*

In the next quarter, workshops and planning will continue in Elgin and in the five Cohort 1 communities. Cohort 2 recruitment activities will continue.

### **Activity 6: Monitoring, Evaluation, & Data Use for Continuous Improvement**

#### **1. Major activities and accomplishments**

##### *Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE)*

As part of the process to improve data quality and capacity to support future analytics, research, and reporting, an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) was initiated and executed between the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Illinois

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Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT). Since the renewal of the IGA, a data sharing agreement to build a proof of concept has been executed. IBM services conducted two training workshops for engaged State Agencies, an IBM Watson Knowledge Catalog expert has been brought on to support data governance development, and data integration has been initiated with two State Agencies.

## *Data Modeling & Demographic Crosswalk*

During this period the following was accomplished: (1) initial build-out of data catalog and request interfaces; (2) identification of data stewards for ISBE and DHS data; (3) establishment of enhanced governance and legal agreements associated with Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) 2.0; and (4) consultation on integrating Head Start/Early Head Start data with state-level data systems.

## *Data Accessibility & Literacy*

The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) continued the work with Pixo to develop a new user interface for the IECAM website.

## **2. Problems**

### *Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE)*

Data sharing agreements require multiple layers of review and time to process. Challenges include integrating data from multiple sources and multiple agencies. Support continues to build data governance within and among the agencies.

## **3. Significant findings and events**

### *Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE)*

Renewing the Inter-Governmental Agreement was significant. In addition, IDHS databases were successfully connected through the Illinois Longitudinal Data System Early Childhood Participation Data Project with IBM Cloud Pak for Data.

### *Data Modeling & Demographic Crosswalk*

Establishment of enhanced governance and legal agreements associated with ILDS 2.0. Consultation on integrating Head Start/Early Head Start data with state-level infrastructure.

## **4. Dissemination activities - N/A**

## **5. Other activities – N/A**

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**6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

*Data Linkage (IDHS & ISBE)*

Weekly discussions between GOECD, DoIT, the Governor's Office, and ISBE have continued to develop the project. Work regarding data sharing agreements and integration of early childhood databases will continue.

*Data Modeling & Demographic Crosswalk*

In Q2, Illinois will: hold expanded Cloud Pak for Data training for ISBE and DHS data stewards; execute the ILDS 2.0 governance agreement; finalize Head Start data access and use agreement.

*Data Accessibility & Literacy*

In Q2, the revised scope of work will be completed.

**Bonus Activities**

**1. Major activities and accomplishments**

*Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

The implementation of the Integrated Referral and Intake System (IRIS) has commenced in four home visiting communities in Illinois: DuPage County, Madison and St. Clair Counties, Sangamon County, and the Sauk Valley (Lee, Ogle, and Whiteside Counties). Each community has a Local Leadership Team that leads the implementation work. All four communities have successfully completed the first two of five phases of the implementation process. The first phase involved the Local Leadership Team understanding their individual leadership roles; undergoing training on the use of the referral tool; developing their local community vision for the use of the tool; and creating an implementation timeline with a goal launch date of the referral tool in August 2020. The second phase involved the Local Leadership Teams introducing the referral tool to their community partners; sharing the community vision behind the use of the tool; providing an overview of the implementation timeline; and gaining additional input from partners.

*I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

A job description was created for the I/ECMHC Professional Development Coordinator and distributed through various networks of Illinois Mental Health Consultants.

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Delivery of three orientation events: Successfully recruited presenters and coordinated sessions for the March 2021 I/ECMHC Orientation. Registration information was sent out, resulting in 23 I/ECMHCs attending. The FAN training has been incorporated into the virtual orientation sessions. A new "Meet and Greet" session was created, and the March 2021 Orientation was completed on 3/26/21.

Maintain and expand Reflective Learning Groups (RLGs): Contracted with five facilitators for six Reflective Learning Groups. Regions include Champaign, Downers Grove, Matteson, Oak Park, Springfield, and Statewide (held virtually). The Professional Development Collaborative reviewed new draft guidelines for RLG structure and management. A new form was designed for potential consultants to complete for consideration by the three agencies that provide oversight to the RLGs.

State System Communication and Connectors: The I/ECMHC Quarterly Meeting was held on January 21, 2021 with 56 consultants in attendance. INCCRRA continues to provide ongoing logistics, supports, and technology for PD delivery and data tracking. Registration information is being collected for the I/ECMHC Fall Retreat, to take place on April 22, 2021. Registration information is being collected for the April 29, 2021 I/ECMHC Quarterly Meeting, for which information was included in the Gateways Registry Membership and I/ECMHC Searchable Database Application. INCCRRA staff facilitate all sessions of the orientation, and data entry of attendees for all I/ECMHC events are entered into the Data Tracking System. INCCRRA applied to be a Continuing Education Sponsoring Agency through the Department of Financial and Professional Regulation's Professional Regulation Division, which would allow INCCRRA to issue CEUs for Professional Counselor, Clinical Professional Counselor, and Social Work.

Support and maintain the statewide I/ECMHC consultant database through Gateways Registry: INCCRRA revised the consultant database application, per conversations with project leadership. The primary change was the inclusion of a rubric which will be used to assess if a consultant has the qualifications required to be listed on the database. This rubric required the addition of several questions to the application as well. INCCRRA began bringing the code branch needed for the consultant database back into the main trunk of code in preparation for release to production in April. Additionally, INCCRRA finalized the requirements for consultant activity tracking.

### *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): WADI's focus is on the social emotional component of the kindergarten transition. They will provide staff, parents, and family support on best practices for the social emotional support of young children and their families using the Conscious Discipline curriculum. In January, WADI teaching staff began virtual

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independent training on the Conscious Discipline curriculum. Teachers can navigate the training at their own pace and have ongoing opportunities for additional support. In January and February, backpacks with materials for families and children were distributed to parents to use with their children. In March, final pre-surveys were compiled from families about their initial experience with social emotional learning. WADI will use the information from the family survey to support what aspect of SEL teachers should focus on to support families.

United Way – East St. Louis: This quarter, United Way of Greater East St. Louis continued their planning and collaborating with stakeholders as part of their kindergarten transition work. In January, United Way began meeting with the Greater East St. Louis Early Learning Partnership (the Partnership) leadership team to discuss including kindergarten transitions in the overall goals. The Partnership was able to quickly adjust their workplan and scope of work to make the most impact with the remaining time during the grant period. In February and March, meetings were held with the kindergarten transitions strategy team that was established in Year 1 of the grant. During these meetings, the strategy team finalized action plans for Q1 and Q2 and began identifying methods of measuring success, which will be finalized in Q2. United Way also created and hired for their Family Liaison positions. The Family liaisons created action plans to support implementation of impact and goals for community and family outreach. One component of their action plan was to lead distribution of kindergarten readiness kits that were delivered in January 2021. The 370 kits were given to six early learning programs and families across the East St. Louis area.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): Austin Coming Together (ACT) is in the planning process of this Kindergarten transition work. They continue to convene meetings with the school district, community, and early childhood stakeholders to plan and determine goals for kindergarten transition work. Representatives from Community Organizing and Family Issues (a parent advocate agency), Erikson Institute (for subject matter expertise), Chicago Public Schools (local public school district), the Collaboration for Early Childhood, and Gone Again Travels (local business) have all been engaged and convened as part of the Core Planning team around this kindergarten transitions initiative. During Core Planning meetings, they have continued to hone their vision, values, best practices, and scope of work on aligning curriculum and assessments, while also figuring out how to navigate ongoing barriers to the successful implementation of this community focused initiative. ACT has an initial Education 1.4 Action Plan drafted and are utilizing it as a living document during the planning phase.

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During Q1, they have started developing the tailored lessons and pre-assessment tools for the child care providers who will be participating in the pilot. They have also been engaging BPI to understand the evolution of their early childhood transition work in Chicago over the past decade to help inform how they scale their vision. ACT has continued to inform the Austin Community Action Council CAC (parenting group that advises Network 3 within CPS) and Austin Quality of Life Plan Education Task Force about this initiative. Lastly, ACT has worked with partner agency, Austin Childcare Provider's Network (ACPN), to update the work plan so it reflects pivots they decided to make in order to move the work forward while determining the scope of their partnership with Chicago Public Schools.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): BPI's pre-k to kindergarten transitions program continues to focus on three common classroom practices identified by the pre-k and kindergarten teachers of the Altgeld-Riverdale community. For 2021, those practices are: attendance/enrollment, trauma informed care, and family engagement.

**Trauma Support:** BPI had two teacher meetings this quarter. The February meeting focused in part on the trauma-related common classroom practice. BPI has developed a partnership with the Juvenile Protective Association (JPA), an organization that now provides regular consultation to all pre-k and kindergarten teachers at six sites in the community, helping the teachers to develop tools to address SEL and the effects of stress and trauma on their students. In addition to the ongoing consultation JPA is providing, they are also designing a trauma-focused PD for the team. This PD will be delivered in Q2.

**Family Engagement:** Last quarter BPI distributed Family Winter Learning Fun Bags to support family engagement and continued learning for families during winter break from school. This quarter BPI created guides for families on additional activities to use with the learning bags. Teachers would provide support to families with these activities and use of the bags, contributing to the connection between the families and the school. BPI also created a family liaison position to support the family engagement portion of their work. They will continue to develop the role and begin the hiring process.

**Attendance:** The March teacher meeting focused on attendance successes and challenges. Teachers shared successful strategies with each other, for example, incentives, creating a parent of the month recognition program, and calling families daily.

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BPI's Transitions work has garnered the interest of Chicago Public Schools leadership. This quarter, BPI provided a briefing for the Chief of the Office of Early Childhood Development, and the office has requested regular meetings so they may better support the work.

## **2. Problems**

### *I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

COVID-19 delays continue to impact work output; therefore, the professional development offerings (e.g. orientation delivery and annual retreat format) and tracking are being reformulated for virtual events. In the Database, changes to requirements after development begins impact timelines. With the pandemic, there were some delays in conversations that resulted in changes to requirements for the activity tracking.

### *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): WADI wants to provide Continuing Education Units (CEUs) to teachers, and the process for becoming eligible to provide CEUs is taking longer than expected. Collaboration meetings and kindergarten field trips must take place virtually due to COVID restrictions. Orientation Day will not be able to take place at each site due to COVID restrictions.

United Way – East St. Louis: United Way noticed their partner centers and child care providers had difficulties keeping up parent and family engagement in the remote environment caused by COVID-19. Timelines for conducting some meetings and activities had to be adjusted due to schools opening and closing and the availability of the teachers/staff.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): ACT has been navigating continued conversations with the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) system, which has been complicated and required more time than originally anticipated due to the size of the system (the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in the country). They have worked through who the contacts are for addressing these issues and engaging CPS representatives more involved in the planning process. In addition, they are having discussions about data sharing agreements among ACPN, CPS, and an independent evaluator. As a result of these ongoing challenges, ACT has pivoted their work and are prioritizing efforts on training and working with the child care providers who are selected for this initiative. Efforts to facilitate shared professional development training between child care providers and CPS teachers will need to be postponed until the partnership has been solidified with the school district. Additionally, COVID has continued to cause delays in ACT's ability to communicate and

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plan with several stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, and families. Since schools have reopened, many administrators and teachers have been prioritizing the needs of students and families by determining how to maintain health and safety and adjust teaching and learning.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): Due to COVID-19 and the possible strike of teachers in the public school (Chicago Public Schools), morale was down and uncertainty was high for the teachers, which began to impact the work BPI was able to do; the progress during meetings was impacted. BPI provided a safe space for the teachers to discuss their ongoing challenges, concerns, and how to problem solve in such an uncertain climate.

### **3. Significant findings and events**

#### *Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

GOECD and the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research staff hosted an orientation with Local Leadership Teams from all communities on January 29, 2021. Participants were provided an overview of the Coordinated Intake pilot project, introductions to each community and staff, and an overview of roles and expectations.

#### *I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

There continues to be interest by consultants, supervisors, and those who are hoping to become consultants in attending the Orientation offerings. A list of those who are hoping to take the next Orientation has been compiled.

Below are noteworthy comments made by some of the March Orientation participants:

"I'm extremely grateful for the training you've been offering. My colleague and I have learned a lot. The content is profound and nuanced yet presented in such a clear, didactic way. I'd love for some other clinicians from our agency to participate in the training..."

"Thank you so much. I completed the evaluation, but I want to say that I don't have words neither in English nor in Spanish to express how much I value this experience. From all perspectives, the training is outstanding!"

"You will be pleased to know that I had my first consult last week using the Reflective Practice model for a child who choked at school and then became afraid to eat at school the next day he was there. I remembered to focus on the teacher's feelings and reactions in the moment and help her to reinforce her own competencies in the moment and to recognize even more fully how her own reactions now in self-regulation

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will be the most helpful thing to teach the little fellow self-regulation skills and the ability to overcome the trauma reactions. It was a little awkward in the respect that this is a new teacher whom I have never met, and I have not yet implemented the Reflective Supervision groups with the teachers and supervisors, so she really had no idea what I was up to. But I hope she felt good about how she reacted and continues to react and has more confidence that her responses have been appropriate to the situation. She mentioned that she heard another teacher, in the moment, get loud as she became afraid during the choking incident, and so she said that she tried to remain calm. So that was a good handle for me to focus on."

### *Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): Teachers were keeping very good pace in completing online trainings and were actively involved in participation with the digital platform. The ability to go through curriculum at their own pace and independently may contribute to teachers feeling they can adjust training for their individualized needs.

United Way – East St. Louis: The Executive Committee of the Greater East St. Louis Early Learning Partnership (the Partnership) and the Kindergarten Transitions Strategy Team voted to align the pilot's activities and goals with the Partnership's strategic plan and structure.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): During Q1, ACT decided it is necessary to pivot the work and prioritize trainings for the selected child care providers on curriculum and assessments as well as develop a parent engagement plan. They must delay some of the tasks in their work plan until the data sharing concerns of CPS are resolved with GOECD and they develop stronger partnerships at the network level. ACT will pause efforts to track progress of students in CPS' elementary schools until GOECD has identified an independent evaluator and CPS has agreed to the data collection components of this initiative. For instance, they will have to place a hold on sharing professional development between state pre-k teachers, kindergarten teachers, and early learning providers

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): An important issue that teachers have brought forth related to attendance challenges is parent access to the COVID vaccine. Some families are weary of the vaccine altogether, and some families don't know how to obtain it. BPI is working with TCA Health, the federally qualified health clinic in the Altgeld-Riverdale community, to host information sessions for parents. TCA Health is interested in collaborating directly with teachers, which BPI will facilitate through our Transitions meetings. A large vaccine event is also planned during Q2.

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#### **4. Dissemination activities**

*Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

For the project's orientation, a PowerPoint presentation was developed that included an overview of the PDG B-5 funding as well as the project. The pilot communities used this presentation to provide an overview of the project to their respective communities and partners.

*I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

The I/ECMHC consultant form to enroll in the Searchable Consultant Database was sent to all current consultants that have completed the Orientation to the Illinois Model of I/ECMHC and the 200 members on the I/ECMHC listserv.

*Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): WADI sent out Conscious Discipline materials/access to online training to families. They also conducted a mid-year survey check-in with staff and included feedback about coaching and support for using Conscious Discipline with families.

United Way – East St. Louis: As a part of their ongoing action plan, the family liaisons hired in Q1 conducted socially-distanced outreach across the community for the following purposes: 1) to build awareness about the kindergarten transitions work happening in School District 189; 2) to share opportunities for participation, including family cafes, planning sessions, etc.; and 3) to connect families to resources about kindergarten transitions.

#### **5. Other activities**

*Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

GOECD and the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnerships and Research hold regular bi-weekly technical assistance and consultation calls with each of the pilot communities.

*Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): WADI received all training certificates and post surveys from staff and created check-ins with families. WADI is still working on obtaining the ability to provide CEU's for pre-k and kindergarten teachers that take the Conscious Discipline training and converting the Collaboration Meeting to virtual.

Illinois Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (GOECD)  
Performance Progress Report - PDG B-5 Renewal  
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**6. Activities planned for the next reporting period**

*Coordinated Application, Eligibility, Enrollment*

The pilot communities will continue to refine their community vision and community partnerships in the implementation work. They will also begin configuring the specific logistics of their referral tool, develop shared standards of use agreements, and establish data governance structures.

*I/ECMHC Database, Orientation, and Reflective Practice*

In Q2 of 2021, INCCRRA will: execute a contract, with key priorities, for a Professional Development Coordinator; deliver three Orientation events; maintain and expand Reflective Learning Groups; provide for State System Communications and Connectors; provide ongoing logistics, supports, and technology for PD delivery and data tracking; support and maintain the statewide I/ECMH Consultant database through the Gateways Registry; implement, support, and maintain the I/ECMH Consultation Activity Tracker database; discuss and identify requirements around outcomes data tracking; and produce I/ECMHC reports and resources.

*Collaborative Transition & Alignment from Birth to the Early Grades*

Wabash Area Development (WADI): In Q2, WADI plans to: complete mid check-ins with staff and families, prepare for kindergarten aged children to 'visit' their new school, conduct a virtual Collaboration Meeting, set goals for summer activity bag, and distribute transition backpacks with activities to families.

United Way – East St. Louis: In Q2, United Way plans to conduct family engagement sessions that will result in the identification of families' priorities for supports. They will also conduct a community-wide planning session which gives the planning teams the opportunity to give feedback on current progress.

Austin Coming Together (ACT): In Q2 of 2021 ACT will: finalize the selection of four child care providers for the kindergarten transitions initiative; continue convening a bi-weekly core planning meeting; start conducting trainings and pre-assessments for selected providers; start engaging Austin families about the importance of kindergarten transition work; and continue to develop relationships with CPS's Network 3 and respective principals.

Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI): In Q2 of 2021, BPI plans to convene ongoing teacher transitions team meetings with PD to support common classroom practices.